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What is a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)?

1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Forest of Dean District Council will involve the community in preparing and revising all local planning documents and in making decisions on planning and related applications. The SCI provides a clear explanation of the opportunities for getting involved in planning issues. This is the fourth SCI produced by the council and will replace the 2018-2023 version.

1.2 The preparation of a SCI is a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. Every Council has to publish a document which lets residents, businesses and other interested parties know how they can get involved in the preparation and review of the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, Neighbourhood Plans/Orders, Community Infrastructure Levy and the consideration of planning applications.

1.3 We will keep the SCI under review to address any changes to the way in which we involve you in planning policy preparation or in decision making on planning applications. If legal requirements change before a new SCI has been produced, then we will always carry out consultations in line with the law at the time.

2 The Planning System

2.1 Planning affects everyone in the community, however most people only get involved in planning when it directly affects them. The Forest of Dean District Council is responsible for most of the decisions on where and what developments takes place (with the exception of mineral planning). Within the Council there are two parts to the planning system: Planning Policy and Development Management.

2.2 The Government sets out national policy through The [National Planning Policy Framework^{\(1\)}](#). The NPPF was last revised in December 2023 and is updated regularly. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's planning policies for England and acts as guidance for Local Planning Authorities and decision makers, both in drawing up plans and making decisions on planning applications and must be taken into account.

Forest of Dean Local Plan

2.3 Local councils are required to produce a local plan which sets out planning policies for the their area. The Forest of Dean Local Plan comprises of several related Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which contain planning policies and related Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide further guidance upon the implementation of the policies.

2.4 Neighbourhood Plans in the Forest of Dean are prepared by parish councils. They are a community led plan for guiding future development, regeneration and conservation of a specific area, it can set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land. A Neighbourhood Development Plan has to support the strategic development needs of the wider area outlined in the local plan. However it can shape and influence where that development will go and what it will look like.

2.5 These all form part of the 'statutory development plan' for the Forest of Dean District and set out the policies to guide where new development is located and to plan for change in the Forest of Dean District. They provide the local policies upon which planning applications will be determined.

2.6 The Forest of Dean Development Plan includes:-

The Core Strategy

The Core Strategy⁽²⁾ was adopted in February 2012, it is the key part of the Local Plan, and all other subsequent development plan documents must be consistent with it. The Core Strategy sets out the long term overall vision and strategic objectives on how the area should develop. It includes a delivery strategy for achieving the objectives, setting out how much development is intended to happen, where, when and by what means it will be delivered, and how the delivery will be managed and monitored.

Allocations Plan

The Allocations Plan⁽³⁾ was adopted in June 2018, it shows how the proposals contained in the Core Strategy will be implemented. It provides detail of the policies which allocate land for development, protected areas and settlement boundaries.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

2 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-new/allocations-plan/>

3 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-new/allocations-plan/>

The Planning System 2

Policies Map

The Policies Map⁽⁴⁾ shows in detail sites identified for particular developments, protected areas and settlement boundaries. It identifies areas of protection such as nationally protected landscape. It is updated as each new document is approved.

Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan

The Cinderford Northern Quarter AAP⁽⁵⁾ was adopted by the Forest of Dean District Council in February 2012. It provides the planning framework for this area.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD/SPG), can be produced to cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provide further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' local plan document, e.g. on Affordable Housing or a large redevelopment area.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA)⁽⁶⁾ is an integral and iterative part of the plan preparation process and is required for each Local Plan document. An SA and/or SEA are required for some Neighbourhood Development Plans and SPDs. It looks at the environmental, social and economic effects of a plan to make sure that the plan promotes sustainable development and takes the most appropriate approach given the alternatives. At each stage of the Plan preparation there is a corresponding stage of the SA/SEA and these documents are made available during public consultation, including publishing any SA/SEA reports alongside early consultation documents.

Other Planning Policy Documents

The Council publishes a project plan for the policy documents it intends to produce called a **Local Development Scheme**⁽⁷⁾. It sets out the timetable outlining the main stages in the production of the local plan documents, including the opportunities for your involvement.

We also produce a yearly **Monitoring Report**⁽⁸⁾ which indicates the stage that the plan has reached in its preparation and also shows how the policies and proposals set out in the adopted local planning documents are being delivered.

The Council holds a register of people and groups of people who are seeking to purchase serviced plots of land in the District known as the **Self Build Register**⁽⁹⁾. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 requires all Local Authorities in England to grant sufficient 'development permissions' to meet the demand for Custom and Self-build housing in their area, as established by their register, on a rolling basis.

4 <http://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/planning-policy-framework-and-monitoring/>

5 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-plan-new/allocations-plan/>

6 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supporting-information-for-the-local-plan-2041/monitoring-and-reports/sustainability-appraisal/>

7 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/planning-policy-framework-and-monitoring/>

8 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/planning-policy-framework-and-monitoring/>

9 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/housing/self-build-housing/>

2 The Planning System

The Forest of Dean **Brownfield land register** provides up-to-date and consistent information on sites within the District that the Council consider to be appropriate for residential development having regard to the criteria set out in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017⁽¹⁰⁾.

The Council also prepares a **Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)**⁽¹¹⁾ which assesses the potential suitability of land within the District for housing development.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP)

2.7 Neighbourhood Development Plans⁽¹²⁾ in the Forest of Dean are prepared by parish councils. Once 'made' (adopted) they form part of the development plan, and so decisions on planning applications have to take account of them. Progress on neighbourhood plans will be published in the Monitoring Report.

2.8 The following Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted Lydney NDP (2016), Longhope NDP (2018), Berry Hill, Christchurch and Edge End NDP (2018), Coleford NDP (2018) Mitcheldean (2020), Alvington (2021) and Huntley (2023)

Development Management (Planning Applications)

2.9 Development Management forms part of the planning process, where applications for planning permission are considered. There are four main areas of work involved in this:

- Preliminary enquiries or informal advice. You will need to apply for planning permission for most major changes to buildings and land although some types of development do not need planning permission (permitted development). The Council offer a paid for service where we will do the checks to determine whether or not you need to apply for planning permission.⁽¹³⁾ Once you know that you need planning permission, we can check if your plans are likely to be approved before you make the formal application, there is a charge for this service. Please see the pre application advice webpage: <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/get-advice-on-your-planning-application/>
- The formal processing of planning and the various other applications (including advertisement, listed building and conservation area consent etc.) for which there are fees set by central Government. The applications are submitted to the council. Planning applications need approval by the local council before they can proceed. They will usually need to conform to the Local Plan and any Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- The enforcement process⁽¹⁴⁾ against unacceptable unauthorised developments.
- The appeal process against a refusal of planning permission, a condition on a permission or an enforcement notice.⁽¹⁵⁾

10 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/403/regulation/4/made>

11 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment/>

12 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

13 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission/>

14 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/report-breach-of-planning-regulations/>

15 <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/planning-appeals/>

Neighbourhood Planning 3

3.1 Neighbourhood Plan preparation and referendum stages should be prepared in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012⁽¹⁶⁾ or in accordance with subsequent legislation and guidance. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are produced by local communities with the support of the Council. We have a duty to provide advice and direction at all stages (making and modifying) that we consider appropriate to help communities produce a neighbourhood plan or order.

3.2 We will support and assist neighbourhood planning groups, for example:

- Provide initial advice and information to those expressing an interest in neighbourhood planning;
- Determine applications to designate a 'neighbourhood area';
- Carry out screening to identify and provide an opinion and advice on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment;
- Share and provide advice on documents and relevant information from within the Local Plan evidence base;
- Practical assistance, such as mapping, where possible;
- Provide advice on community engagement, publicising consultation including in the preliminary stages of neighbourhood plan making;
- Provide advice and informal comments on draft policies, on the emerging plan and other supporting documents;
- Make formal representations at the pre-submission consultation stages;
- The Council will undertake the consultation on the Submission Plan, and organise and fund the examination and referendum;
- Consider the examiner's report, and determine whether the plan should go forward to referendum. Where an examiner recommends modifications, it is the Council's role to consider and make the modifications;
- If the Plan passes the referendum, the Council will 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the development plan and publish on the Council website unless it considers that this would breach, or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights;

3.3 The process for modifying neighbourhood plans should be flexible to correct errors and keep them up-to-date, and should therefore be proportionate to the changes proposed. Minor updates that would not materially affect policies may be made by the local planning authority, with consent from the qualifying body. In these circumstances, there is no need to repeat consultation, examination and the referendum. Substantial revision to a neighbourhood plan would need to go through the later stages of the process from pre-submission consultation onwards.

3 Neighbourhood Planning

Stages of a Neighbourhood Development Plan

Designation of a Neighbourhood Area	The Neighbourhood Area Designation Application is submitted to the Council. No statutory consultation is required if the area proposed is a single Parish. If the area does not follow a parish boundary we will consult on the application for 6 weeks.
Draft Plan	The parish steering group will engage with and involve their residents in the plan preparation process and must report what they have done in their consultation statement. They prepare the draft neighbourhood plan. <i>The Council will provide support, assistance and informal comments on the emerging plan.</i>
Pre-submission Regulation 14	The Parish Council /steering group will consult on the Pre-submission Plan for a minimum of 6 weeks. <i>The Council will make formal representations.</i>
Submission to the Local Planning Authority Regulation 15 and 16	The Plan is submitted to the Council. If the plan meets specific criteria the Council will formally publish and consult on the plan for a minimum of 6 weeks.
Submission of NDP for Examination Regulations 17	The Council in liaison with the Parish /NDP group will appoint an independent examiner who is sent all representations and who assesses the draft plan against required criteria. The examination is organised and funded by the Council.
Independent Examination and Examiners Report	The examiner has 3 options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the plan proceeds to referendum as submitted 2. the plan is modified by the LPA to meet basic conditions and then the modified version proceeds to referendum 3. The plan does not proceed to referendum.
Referendum	If the plan or order proceeds to referendum and more than half the votes agree (50% plus one vote) it can proceed to adoption.
Adoption	The Plan or Order is “made” (adopted) by the Council.

How to get information and stay informed 4

4.1 Getting involved in the planning process at an early stage is essential to shape the decisions that are made. For every plan that we produce and any planning applications that are submitted to us to determine, we must consult and engage with people and organisations in making our decisions. You can be involved in the two aspects of town planning:-

- **Local Plan preparation (Local Plan Documents)**
- **Development Management (Planning Applications)**

Local Plan

Plan Preparation (Local Plan Documents)

Who we will consult

4.2 The community who live and /or work in the Forest of Dean District are the people who will experience the outcomes of planning decisions. The list below provides information on who we will engage.

- Specific consultation bodies. The Local Plan regulations⁽¹⁷⁾ set out who must be consulted in preparing our new plans and proposals. These include statutory organisations such as Councils, Parish and Town Councils, infrastructure providers and government bodies.
- General consultation bodies as required by the planning regulations:- these include other organisations representing different sections of the local community such as local voluntary groups, bodies representing local economic, social and other community interests and relevant interested parties
- Local businesses, voluntary and other organisations
- Others who have expressed an interest in the subject matter
- The general public

4.3 We maintain a database of people and organisations who have been involved in planning policy consultations in the past as well as people who have said that they may be interested in this in the future, or who just wish to be kept informed of forthcoming changes to the Local Plan in the Forest of Dean. We will email or write to these people when we carry out planning policy consultations. You can register yourself directly onto the database:

online at <https://fdean-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/> or,

alternatively, you can contact the Local Plans Section if you wish to be added, either by email to localplans@fdean.gov.uk or

by post to: Local Plans, Forest of Dean District Council, High Street, Coleford, GL16 8HG

4.4 The database will be used to manage responses made during consultation stages as Local Plan documents are prepared. This will mean that, once registered, stakeholders will be able to view the comments that they have made on a particular document, as well as our response to these where applicable. Comments and our responses will be publicly accessible online by anyone who wishes to see them. We will manage and review this regularly to keep it as up-to-date as possible.

4.5 During consultation periods for local plan documents anyone, who wishes, may make comments online via our consultation portal: <https://fdean-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/>

by email: localplans@fdean.gov.uk or

by post: Local Plans, Forest of Dean District Council, High Street, Coleford, GL16 8HG

17 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/contents/made>

4 How to get information and stay informed

Duty to co-operate

4.6 The Localism Act sets out a 'duty to co-operate', that is, local authorities are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies in preparing their development plan documents. This applies to all local planning authorities, national park authorities and county councils in England and to a number of other public bodies. The Planning Policy Framework requires strategic policy-making authorities to prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the progress being made with regards to co-operation between authorities and the cross-boundary matters being addressed.

How we will consult

4.7 All Local Plan and supplementary planning documents are available on the Planning Policy pages of our website at <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/>

4.8 All Local Plan consultations will be a minimum of 6 weeks with the exception of supplementary planning documents where a consultation will be a minimum of 4 weeks. As a targeted and flexible approach to engagement is required, we have identified a variety of methods which seek to address the varying requirements to maximise opportunities for involvement in the plan making process. The types and methods that will be used either individually or in combinations are:

- We will publish all information and documents on the Council's website.
- We will publish consultations as appropriate by methods such as leaflets, posters, displays and newspaper notices.
- We will notify appropriate organisations and individuals on the Local Plan database of any consultation events electronically or where a person does not have an email address, letters will be sent to them if practicable.
- Wherever possible copies of the consultation documents will be available for the public to view at:
 - **Forest of Dean Council Offices, Coleford**
 - **Forest of Dean Council website:** the documents will be available on the planning pages of the Council website www.fdean.gov.uk.
- Paper copies of the documents may be purchased at a price reflecting printing costs.
- Documents will be available on request in alternative formats.
- We have a number of social media channels which we utilise to reach a higher number of viewers. We may, in appropriate circumstances promote consultation events and direct readers to web resources using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and X.

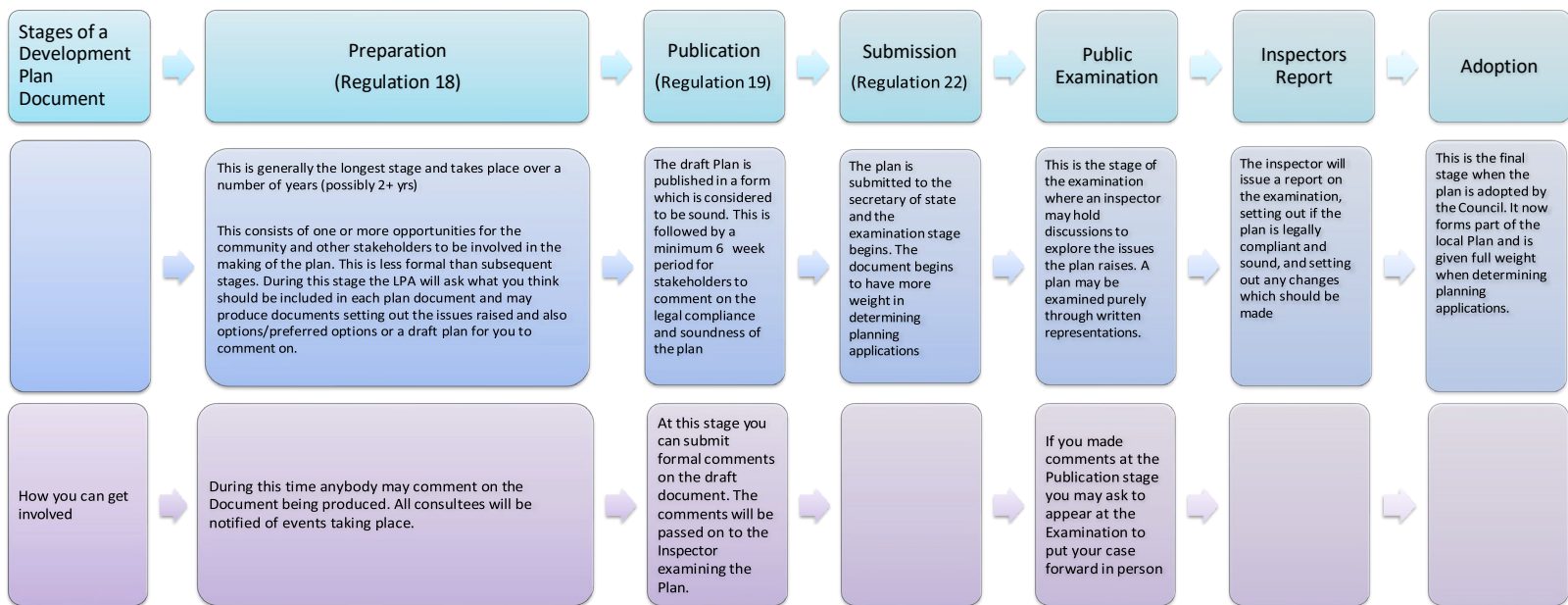
Following the Consultations

- We will publish comments received as soon as possible.
- We will explain how these comments have been considered.
- We will set out the next steps for the document.

When will we consult?

4.9 The following diagram outlines the Local Plan process for shaping a local plan document. It sets out the various stages when an organisation or individual may comment on a document.

Local plan Process



4 How to get information and stay informed

4.10 Before a document is drafted, we will ask for ideas, views and gather information and evidence from appropriate organisations, individuals and communities. We will ask what the document should consider.

4.11 After considering the initial comments we will usually consult on a draft document which will explain issues to be considered and it may include potential options. There may be the need to prepare documents for additional consultation stages setting out further options, information, greater detail or a preferred option.

4.12 We will publish a draft plan with a consultation aimed at ensuring the draft is relevant to the Forest of Dean. We will evaluate the social, environmental and economic impacts of the emerging plan through a sustainability appraisal.

4.13 We will formally publish the “Proposed Submission” document (or equivalent under any revision to the relevant regulations) and ask for comments on the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan. All comments received at this stage will be submitted to the Secretary of State and considered at the Public Examination.

4.14 When the document is submitted to the Secretary of State we will notify all specific and general consultation bodies and any person who requested to be notified of the submission document.

Exceptional circumstances

4.15 There may be times when we cannot meet all of our commitments due to exceptional circumstances, even though we have listed them in this document. We will always be committed to keeping essential services running but the way we deliver some services may change. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 we were not able to display printed copies of some of the Council’s documents at the District Council Offices in Coleford as they were closed. There may be other exceptional circumstances in the future which prevent us from doing what we have said we will. We will always follow the latest government advice on how to protect the community and our staff.

How to get information and stay informed 4

Planning application process

Development Management - Planning Applications

4.16 The Planning service exists for the benefit of the whole community and has to take into account not only the wishes of the individuals or businesses who want to develop but also the views of people affected by the proposed development. This SCI sets out how we will consult the public and other organisations when a planning application is received.

Consultation: Awareness raising and notifying the public of new planning applications

4.17 On receipt of a planning application, the following methods are used for notifying members of the public.

Statutory Duties

Site Notices

4.18 A green site notice will be posted by the District Council to publicise all proposed developments including applications which:

- affect a Listed Building or its setting or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area
- are accompanied by an environmental impact assessment
- are a departure from the development plan
- affect a public right of way

for which it is a statutory requirement that notices are posted. Amended applications that have significant changes proposed before a decision is made by the Council, will be readvertised with a pink site notice.

Newspaper Advertisements

4.19 In addition to site notices, a statutory advertisement will be inserted by the District Council in a local newspaper for the proposed developments listed above.

Non-statutory additional methods

Website

4.20 The planning page of the Forest of Dean District Council website allows individuals to sign up and be alerted to planning applications within a chosen area. Individuals are able to track applications through their journey online and be alerted to any changes that are made to it. This is the best way for residents to be notified of and stay in touch with planning applications.

Neighbour Notification

4.21 The case officer may also decide to notify other properties at the time of their site visit with a flyer posted through the door. Such publicity will be undertaken where the case officer considers the adjoining property might be materially affected in planning terms, whose property is located some distance

4 How to get information and stay informed

away from where the site notice was posted and they have not yet commented. The discretionary inclusion of a property in any neighbour notification undertaken by this method will be assessed on a case by case basis and depend to some extent on the nature, use and layout, as well as the nature and character of the proposed development itself.

4.22 A period of 21 days will be allowed for comments to be made. At the discretion of the Council, if significant changes are made to an application a re-consultation for a further 21 day period may be made. With regard to applications for Permissions in Principle and Technical Details Consent the consultation period with neighbours and parish councils is reduced to 14 days. The Council will take account of any relevant consultation responses.

4.23 In addition to notifying the public about new planning applications we will consult statutory consultees i.e. public bodies such as Parish and Town Councils and other relevant organisations or agencies, giving them 21 days to respond. Consultation is normally by electronic means.

4.24 Copies of all planning applications will be available for the public to view and to comment on via the [Public Access](#) ⁽¹⁸⁾ pages of the Forest of Dean District Council website. On registering with public access, it is possible to search for planning applications and to save these searches or to track an existing application, the person will then be notified by email of any updates.

4.25 Discharge of conditions application are not the subject of consultation with parish councils or neighbours.

Applications to undertake works to trees.

4.26 The Council consults on applications to undertake works to trees in the following way:

- to undertake works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) by placing a notice on site - consultation period of 21 days.
- to undertake works to trees within a conservation area by placing a notice on site - consultation period of 14 days.

4.27 Where applications meet the appropriate requirements they may be considered as ‘enhanced’ applications. Enhanced applications are divided into two groups: Minor and Major. For Minor applications (e.g. crown reductions under 15 % or removal of a single branch less than 120mm diameter at the trunk) no consultations will be undertaken. For enhanced major applications neighbours and Parish Council will be contacted as detailed above.

4.28 In the case of **Demolition applications** (buildings over 50 square metres) and **agricultural determinations** consultations, these are discretionary. Parish Councils are notified and the deadline for comments will be 14 days due to the government reduced target time of 28 days for dealing with the application.

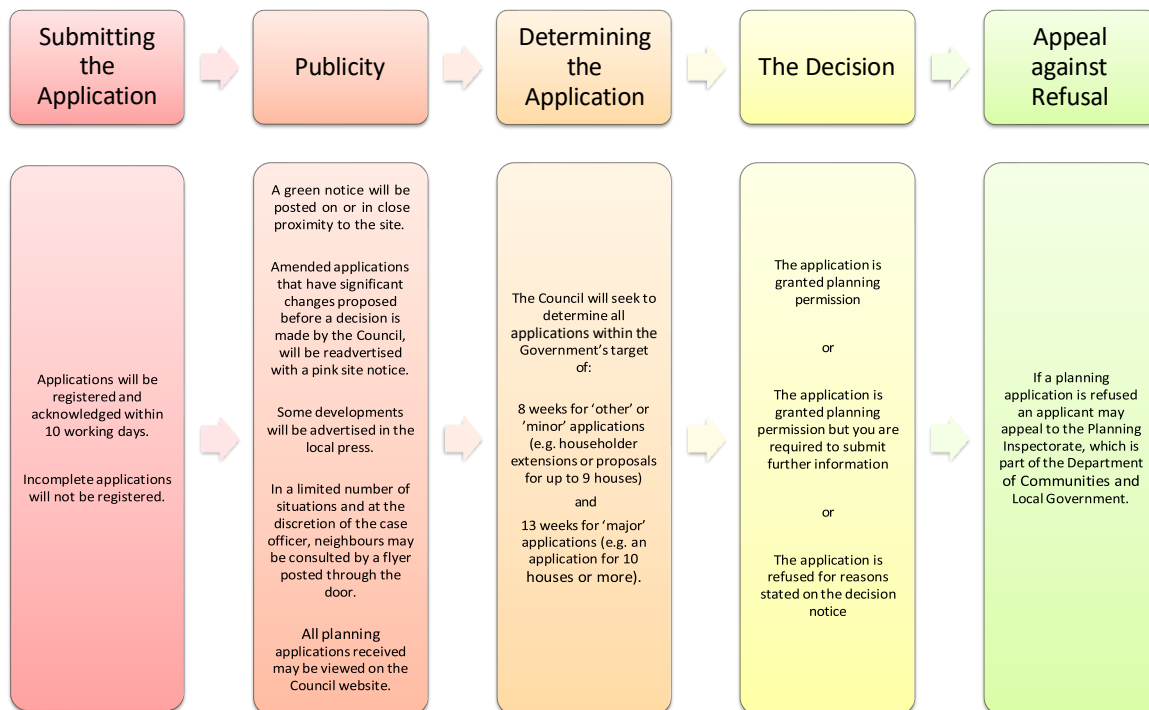
4.29 Applications for very small changes known as **non material amendments** will not be the subject of any consultation.

4.30 Planning applications are public documents and can be viewed on the Council’s website. All comments will be available for public inspection and posted on the Council's website. The Council will publish the decisions on all planning applications on its website.

18 <https://publicaccess.fdean.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

How to get information and stay informed 4

Diagram showing planning application process



5 How to make your comments

5.1 Local Plan Documents: To make a representation (comment) on a Forest of Dean local plan document during its consultation period either:

1. Email: localplans@fdean.gov.uk
2. Write to : Local Plans, Forest of Dean District Council, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8HG
3. Log on to the consultation portal: <https://fdean-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/>

5.2 Planning applications: To make a comment on a planning application during its consultation period:

1. The preferred form of communication is via the public access system having viewed the application online on the council's website
<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/view-planning-applications/>.
2. Email: planning@fdean.gov.uk
3. Write to: Development Management, Forest of Dean District Council, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8HG

5.3 A name and address will be needed for any comment to be taken into account. Anonymous e-mails or letters will not be accepted as valid. All comments received are public documents and will be made available to view online through the Public Access system (for planning applications) or consultation webpage (for local plans). They cannot be kept confidential, although personal information (signatures, email addresses and phone numbers) is censored.

Data Protection Statement

5.4 We will only use your personal information for the lawful and specific purposes of the Local Plan and Development Management. We will not give information about you to anyone else or use information about you for any other purpose, unless the law allows us to. Parts of the information you provide will be entered into a public records management system. Further privacy information can be found on our website. <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-data-and-information/data-protection/>

6.1 The Statement of Community Involvement must be reviewed every 5 years from adoption. In addition, we will review and update the SCl to reflect any national legislative changes or proposed changes to local practice.